1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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him. He has, however, to cook food for his wife. The latter during ordinary menstrual periods stays, in villages where there are menstrual rooms or private and not communal menstruation huts, on her side of the mud threshold and keeps there special water-pots and cooking pots; her husband brings food and water in the regular pots, and, standing on his non-taboo side of the mud threshold, pours their contents into the menstruation water and cooking pots. But as he may never touch the latter, he cannot use them for preparing food for his wife after child-birth, and so has to buy a special set of pots for cooking her food then, which are destroyed at the end of her period of seclusion. Nor is the husband permitted to enter the ordinary rooms of the house until the child's navel-cord has fallen off; he has to build a temporary room at the back of the house near the menstruation room or hut, and cook there. It is taboo for him to give any other person any fire from the hearth in this temporary kitchen. Breach of the taboos attaching to child-birth by either parent is believed to entail the wrath of the Village Mother. During the period of seclusion the mother is permitted to leave the room only to bury the placenta or to answer the call of nature. As it is taboo for her to pick or break anything growing during the period, she has before her delivery to lay in enough leaves for cleaning herself after defecation to last for the full period. She wears nothing but the *mudang* until the end of the period.

After the navel-cord has fallen off or at the end of the period of seclusion, the mother goes out at night to the river, immerses herself, and cleans her old loin-cloth and the cloth of her *mudang*. In the early morning she emerges wearing her loin-cloth and carrying her baby, which in most villages her husband then sees for the first time; around Handawada, however, he is allowed to see it in the menstruation room on the morning after it is born. The mother has to sprinkle every part of the house with water.

From birth to death there is no age ceremony of any kind, neither at birth, naming, weaning, ear-boring, hair-cutting, puberty, first shaving, nor on any other occasion. Normally

Naming

the child gets no name until it is two or three years old, when its parents know its physique and something of its character. But there are three exceptions to this. When the child is brought out from the place where it was born at the end of the initial period of seclusion, it is examined for birth-marks; and if these are considered to be the same as those of a dead ancestor it is given that ancestor's name, or, if, for example, the child is a boy and has his father's mother's birth-marks, it gets her husband's name. Thus Usendi Moda, the headman of Orcha, was called after his dead grandfather because he had the same mole on his hip as he;

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553 Yete Mura, the headman of Hoinar, was born hare-lipped and was therefore named after his hare-lipped paternal grandfather; and Jugho Dallu, the headman of Hitulnar, recognized on his son the birth-marks of his dead mother Pora'i and therefore gave him the name of her dead husband Dugha. This practice is a sign of some sort of belief in the reincarnation of the Departed. The second exception is the practice of giving a name immediately after birth when birth has coincided with some natural phenomenon or incident. Usendi Ippo of Orcha was called Ippo because born when the *mahua* tree (*ippa marra* in Maria) was in flower; Usendi Irka was born when the cucumbers (*irka*) were ripening in the *penda* fields; Usendi Ghasi was so named because, just before he was born, a *patwari* rode into Orcha and ordered his father Moda to go and cut grass (*ghas* in Halbi) for his pony. Oyami Gursha, headman of Komu, was born when his father and uncles were making a wicker-work bin (*gursha*) for storing grain. Yete Mura named his daughter Reko because she was born when the *reka marra* tree (*Aegle marmelos*) was in fruit. The third exception, which, like the first, indicates some belief, if not in reincarnation, at least in a previous existence, is the practice when a new-born baby cries loudly for three or four days of reciting to it all the names that the parents can remember and giving it the last name uttered before it stops crying, on the theory that it has stopped crying on recognizing its name. Normally, however, the name is not given till the child is two or three, and then depends on such things as whether it is fat or thin, slow or smart, learnt to walk or speak quickly, and so on. Thus a boy was named Moriel or 'hare' because he used to double suddenly like a hare when running about the village; Bunge is a name given to a boy with a huge stomach; Baiyya or 'mad' to a harum-scarum boy; Banga to a shy, untalkative child; and U'ile or 'thin' to a child thin through much illness in his early years.

551 177 Russell and Hiralal state (III, p. 87) of the Gond race as a whole that names derived from the Gondi language are rare or non-existent and, on this assumption, actually suggest that perhaps the Gonds had not advanced to the stage of having individual names before they came into contact with the Hindus! This is certainly not true of either Hill or Bison-horn Marias. Of 103 male and 38 female Hill Maria names collected from 215 men and 107 women, and 103 male and 23 female Bison-horn Maria names collected from 236 men and 68 women, very few, not 5 per cent., were Hindu, the proportion of Hindu names being, as might be expected, slightly higher among the Bison-horn Marias. Only about 27 per cent. of the Hill Maria men's names and 8 per cent. of their women's names occur also, in the same or a modified form, in the lists of Bison-horn

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843 secluded for their first menstruation, known as the *piki-kurma-lon*; but generally speaking, Bison-horn Marias do not seem to hold in the same strength the Hill Maria fear of a woman in this condition.

844 For the birth of a child a separate hut or booth is erected in the compound, generally at the back of the house, known as the *er-nihitana-lon*, or water-washing hut. This is often little more than the roughest of booths, and considerably inferior to even a Bison-horn Maria pigsty. Here the mother remains for a full month, during which her husband is not allowed to go to his work. The delivery is assisted by an experienced woman relative or fellow-villager, who cuts and binds the navel-cord and washes the child immediately after it is born, and gives it to the mother to suckle. No food is given to the mother that day; on the next morning she is made to drink a decoction of the bark of the *kusum* [824] tree (*Schleichera trijuga*), the root of the dwarf *chhind* palm (*Phoenix sylvestris*), and *kulthi* (*Dolichos biflorus*) pulses, pounded to a powder and boiled together, and an hour or two after this dose she is given a meal of warm boiled rice. She is dosed and fed in this way for six or seven days more, until the navel-cord falls off; and then she washes her whole body and is allowed to eat regular meals. At the 852 end of the month the *lon-wa'ina* or Returning to the House ceremony takes place. The child is named with the aid of a medium, though 533 actually names seem to be given for reasons very similar to those actuating Hill Maria choice of names. A pig, a goat or a number of cocks are killed, and the mother, having washed her clothes and her body, cooks the flesh, all the villagers and relatives being entertained to dinner. Thenceforward the mother is free to resume all her normal household and field work, and the father can resume his work.

553 I once witnessed an unusual naming ceremony. A son had been born after three elder brothers had died. It was considered 789 that their deaths had been due to the hostility of some demon or of the familiar spirit of some magician, and on the medium's advice the baby had been suspended in a rough cradle over the rubbish-heap by the fence of the *bari* garden, and all the men present threw cow-dung and filth all round the cradle, shouting out '*Kacharu*' or 'Filth!', which name was given to the child in the hope that thereby the malignant power would be deceived into thinking that the parents set no value on the child.

862 Children are breast-fed for two years or more, as among the Hill Marias. It has been already recorded (page 219) that there is among the Bison-horn Marias a special weaning ceremony during the Jata Pandum at which the first solid food given to the children is a portion of the rice and meat offered to the Departed.

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844 seat above it. Near by he drives the arrow or knife into the ground. He brings a pot of water and puts it inside the hut ; should the water [787] decrease of its own accord it is regarded as a very bad omen and the child is expected to die. This hut is now used constantly by the mother who comes five or six times a day to bathe herself and the baby. She always takes water from the pot kept inside the enclosure and it is refilled each time with warm water heated elsewhere. The mother regularly pours warm water over the child's umbilical stump, for so long as it does not drop off she is in a state of taboo and can do no work.

In some villages the placenta is buried under a *bassia latifolia* tree and a large stone is placed above, ' for this tree does every kind of work for us '. Very small babies are sometimes buried in the same place so that they can suck the milky sap.

When the stump falls off, it is buried in the placenta-pit ; should it be dug up and eaten, for example, by a dog, the child would cease suckling and die. After a year has passed the Perma comes to offer compensation of a fowl and rice-beer to the Earth Mother because they have offended her by burying the placenta and cord in the ground.

846 Once the stump has dropped the mother is free of the restric-
852 tions on her and when she feels ready—' when her body is dry and clean '—she has a final bath, cowdungs the house and begins to cook and live normally again. The father shaves the child's head. The mother herself destroys the little bathing-hut. The father smears the arrow with oil and puts it in the roof of the house. When a boy grows up it is shown to him and he can use it for hunting, though no special virtue seems to attach to it.

852 On the day of the mother's ceremonial entry into the house,
553 there is a little feast, cooked by the woman herself, on the veranda. The Perma and a few neighbours are invited and they have a pot of rice-beer. Before they drink, each of the visitors dips his finger into it and gives it to the child to suck. The mother presents oil and a ring to each of the women who helped her and to the Waddai and Perma. The child is often, though not always, named on this occasion. A chicken is dedicated by being fed on rice and is set free. A year later it is sacrificed and a bit of the liver is given to the child. If a baby cries continually it is supposed that it has been given the wrong name and the Waddai renames it and dedicates another chicken. In Gadapal I was told that if the gods disapprove a child's name, they send Hidmaraj to make it itch and Markaraj to make it cry.

845 The Marias do not seem to have made up their minds about twins. One village thinks them lucky, another disastrous. There

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is a vague idea that monozygotic twins are more likely to be fortunate than dizygotic. Thus when Tati Buta's wife gave birth to female twins at Palnar, it was observed that they had but one placenta and the people declared them to be lucky and expected them to survive—which they did. But at Phulpar, where Sodi Mandra's wife gave birth to dizygotic twins, a boy and a girl, both died within a fortnight, and at Bara Harmamunda, where Oyami Kama's wife had male twins of the same order, both parents and the children died soon afterwards. 845

The Marias believe that the cause of such births may be physical, magical or supernatural. When Gangu of Koriras had male twins it was believed to have been due to her eating off a leaf-plate made of double leaves. It was the indiscretion of eating a double cob of maize that gave Oyami Kama's wife her twins. The Marias, therefore, are generally careful not to pick double leaves or fruit—double plantains, ebony fruit, maize and so on. Even a husband should be careful about this. For even though twins are not specially unlucky nobody wants them, and it is hard for the mother to nourish two children properly. If a young girl has twins, it is generally assumed that she has been lying with more than one man. At Gogonda a woman had intercourse both with her husband and a lover on the day of her post-menstrual bath. The result was twins and such grievous offence to the Departed that they killed both children within a few weeks.

The Marias also believe that twins may be the result of intercourse with a supernatural being. At Gudra I was told how Hunga Nupo's wife was visited by a Rau: 'He laughed and went to her. The next day her husband lay with her and in due time she gave birth to twins.' A similar story is told of the wife of Sodi Mandra.

Maria twins, like twins all over India, are named after the inseparable couple Rama and Lakshman. Two boys are Rama and Lakha, two girls Rame and Lakhe. The after-birth, whether double or single, of both children is buried in one pit and only one arrow is put above it. In the same way the twins are supposed to remain very close to each other throughout their lives. 845 553

VI

Grigson was unable to find any trace of the dormitory among the Bison-horn Marias; the people always denied that they existed, and even said that they were a degraded institution. Grigson was rightly suspicious of these denials, for in fact a simple form of dormitory exists in most of the bigger Bison-horn Maria villages. Even to-day the headmen deny their existence—I have never 883

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THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

844 Until the stump falls the father is in a state of taboo. He must not cook, he must not leave the house to visit his friends, he cannot go to the ghotul. No one will accept his tobacco and he cannot share in a sacrificial feast.

843 Certain attempts are made to influence and to diagnose the sex of unborn children. If a motiari, after fasting for twelve hours at her first menstruation, eats a dish of *khichri*, a mixture of pulse and rice without salt, her children will likewise be a mixture of boys and girls. If she goes to the jungle on this day and brings home a bundle of leaves on her hip, she is likely to bear girls.

Sometimes Muria women try to discover the sex of the next child by examining the colour and number of the knots on the umbilical cord of the first, but that no one takes these forecasts very seriously is seen in the riddle about a pregnant woman.

[524] *Chipta upre jai phar,* There is fruit inside the basket,
Jāna bābu kai phar? How can you know what fruit it is?

845 Abnormal births are not common but are not unknown. Twins are called *jāmar jiya* and are not regarded as either particularly lucky or unlucky. Twins with a single placenta are born if the mother eats a double fruit such as a double plantain or tendu or uses double leaves as a plate. Sensible women are careful to avoid doing this but sometimes accidents happen. In Rengagondi, there are twins, named Joga and Jogi, who were born because the mother ate off a double leaf at the end of her period. Such twins may also be due to a woman's passing between two men on her way back to the house from her menstrual bath. The shadows of both men fall upon her and the twins resemble them. In some places, it is thought if she passes at this time a man holding a baby she will have twins—if it is a boy, she will have male twins; if a girl, male and female. If the woman lies on her back after intercourse so that the man's seed divides into two streams, twins may result. When there are two placentae it is often supposed that the woman has been to two men and the twins, therefore, have different fathers. The woman may also have had intercourse with a ghost or spirit on the day following intercourse with her husband. Where this is suspected, the twins (if boy and girl) are called Dukhalu and Dukhali and are vaguely regarded as unlucky.

[777] Pandru of Bermakot twice had twins, from different wives. The first were from the Manjaro whom he made pregnant in the ghotul and were both girls: the second were from the Nirosa, another of his ghotul lovers, and were both boys. Pandru thinks he had twins because he went to each of the girls twice on the night following the post-catamenial bath. If this is done during the rains, girls will be born: if during the hot weather, there will be boys.

[777] A foot-presentation is called in Gondi *tāli-janamta* or 'cow-birth', for the child is born like a calf. This is regarded as very unlucky indeed and the family must immediately protect the child by waving round it a bundle of burning grass. Such births are generally expected to be fatal to the mother. A *kera bānjh* is a woman with only one child; 'she is like a plantain which gives fruit once on a stalk and never again'.

II. Name-giving

● 553 After about six weeks the mother stops her ritual bathing and resumes her domestic duties inside the house. It is now time to give the child a name, a name—it must be remembered—which the little chelik or motiari will hardly use during the period of childhood, which will never be taken by husband or wife after marriage, and will be uttered only with reluctance after death. Even then a later nickname may supplant this *mur-podor* or original name.

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THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

But this name is important because of its connexion with the theory of rebirth, and before it is given it is necessary to discover which of the family ancestors has returned in the young child. Many different methods of divination are adopted. At Bandopal they tied up some rice into a little bundle of siari leaves and put it on the child's head. Then the Siraha took the names of all the family ancestors that he could remember one by one: if the child drops the bundle on its shoulder as the medium is repeating a name, they know who it is. In the Sonawal Pargana I found the Muria placing a lighted lamp in a leaf-cup of sarai above the pit where the placenta was buried, while they waved a second lamp round the child reciting names. The child shows its recognition of its name by putting its hands out towards the lamp. In Kari-khodra they put a chicken-bone in the child's hand and give the name that is used when the child drops it. At Gorma, they made a ball of siari leaves, put it in front of the child and waited till it touched it. Sometimes, the child refuses to drink its mother's milk. Then the medium is called and he recites names as usual; they give the one that coincides with the child's turning to the breast. In Aturgaon, they wave rice in a leaf-cup round the child, put it down before it, stick a scrap of rice on a siari stalk and place it in the child's hand. When the child throws the rice over its shoulder, they give the name.

The names are, as we might expect, slowly becoming Hindu in character, though this tendency should not be exaggerated. Out of 2000 names, only 85 were specifically Hindu and such names as Ram, Ganesh, Govind, Sita, Indira, were comparatively rare. Girls and boys are sometimes named after the Hindu months in which they were born—Asaru, Baisakhu, Bhadru or Phagu—and after the day of the week—Aitu, Mangal and Sani.[1]

As always, events at the time of birth influence a child's name.

Akalsai or Kangalu	Born in a famine year
Barat or Bartiya	Born during a marriage procession
Dera	Born in a hut
Duwaru	Born in the yard
Irpa	Born at the time of picking mahua flowers
Sataru	A seven-months child

The usual derogatory names are given with the idea of depreciating a child's value in the eyes of hostile spirits.

Amlu	Sour	Burjaha	Dirty
Apoti	Stinking	Chamra	Shoemaker
Banda	Naked, or dock-tailed	Dhondu	Useless
Barko	Thin	Ganda	A despised weaver
Barra	Crack-brained	Gatharu or Gatti	A little bundle, or undersized
Baya or Baihi	Mad	Hoche	Drunkard
Bhondu	Stupid	Jakari	Madman
Bhoska	A dunce	Lardhu	Useless
Bhuka	Hungry	Sukdu	Wizened
Bohber	Stinking		

A remarkable name in this class is Duma, the Halbi word for the dead.

Yet on the other hand, there are just as many names calculated to flatter the child. The derogatory names are generally only given when calamity

[1] In the text I have mostly given the names of men: in many cases a feminine form of the same word is used for women, thus Bhuki, Sukli, Sugria.

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GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

'Now that you have begun to come to the ghotul, you must come every day. You must bring one bit of wood every day. You must first salute me and then all the other chelik and you must do what they tell you to do.' To a girl he says, 'You must obey the Belosa and Dulosa, and clean the ghotul every day'. 883X

A little boy must bring a *gih*-mat with him. This is usually made for him by his mother or an elder sister. But a girl is allowed to beg for a 'camping site' on someone else's mat.

The children are now called *nona* or *noni* till they get proper titles. They do not join the dances, unless they are being specially instructed; they generally play and sleep together. At bedtime they have to salute the full members with Johar. Every evening they must bring a bit of wood for the ghotul store. In some places they have to hand round the tobacco which nowadays takes the place of the ganja which was provided in Lingo's ghotul. When girls are few, the boy probationers massage the elder boys, but not as the girls do it—they massage the legs and thighs. Both boys and girls have to act as ghotul fags and are made to work hard enough. Old Sukali of Masora described how as a little girl, the Pissa of the ghotul, 'I used to carry little bundles for the others at dances and marriages. I was always ordered about by everyone'.

The older boys and girls take a lot of trouble over these children. They teach them manners and to keep their mouths shut. They instruct them in dancing and the ghotul games. They watch them closely and punish any failure or slackness. They specially watch a child's regularity of attendance, and whether a boy brings his wood properly and the girl does her cleaning. Regularity, obedience and habits of work are taught and tested. 883X 867

When a sufficient time has passed, and the leaders see that the children have grasped the ghotul rules and customs, they decide to give them a title at the next Dassera or Diwali. To the Muria these festivals are simply dates; they do not observe them in a religious sense; and the date is nearly always wrong. In some ghotul, children are given names at any time of the year; in others, boys are named at Dassera and girls at Diwali; in others again, boys and girls are named together at Diwali. In some ghotul, in Pandripani, for example, and Bandopal, girls are given their titles at the menarche. 'When a girl first puts water on her head, then we give her a name.' But this cannot be a general rule, for I have seen dozens of little girls with ghotul names. 883X 553

Titles are given at a simple and pleasant ceremony. I was present at Sidhawand on 5 November 1940 at the naming of five children. At the beginning of the evening, the boys and girls assembled, each bringing a seer of parched rice. The Sirdar and Kotwar measured each contribution to see that the quantity was right, and then poured it onto a cloth spread on a mat in the middle of the ghotul compound. Presently the Belosa brought three leaf-cups and the Sirdar filled one for Lingo Pen, one 'for the Diwali' and one for the Village Mother and her consort. The rest of the rice was divided into four parts, for men, for women, for Kokameta (a neighbouring ghotul with which the Sidhawand ghotul was on very friendly terms) and for the boys and girls of Sidhawand. These last, it may be observed, only got a quarter of the feast.

This done, the Belosa and Dulosa held a formal consultation, came forward and called out three diminutive boys, Tuna, Gando and Dorga. They caught hold of each in turn, lifted him up, hit him twice and announced his name. To Tuna they gave the title Tel-dundi, to Gando the name Hardi-garbo and

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to Dorga the attractive title Chelik-sunder. Then the Sirdar called the leading boys aside and they whispered together for a few minutes. The Sirdar went to the group of girls, picked up two of them and brought them into the middle of the company. He lifted each in turn and hit her with his clenched fist. To the first, Sukmi, he gave the name Jankáí and to the second, Pakli, the name Mankai. This was all done, as it should be done, in the presence of the people, in the face of the village elders, who yet by an absurd fiction are not supposed to know that such a thing as a ghotul name exists.

FIG. 63. Ear-ring with pendant of red, blue and white beads
Actual size

The motiari now did Johar, first to the Sirdar, then to all the chelik and elders and visitors, but not to any women. Then the Sirdar, followed by the three boy initiates, did the same. This is the only occasion when the Sirdar salutes his 'subjects'—it is a kind action, to make the little boys feel at home. It is the last time the initiates perform the Johar rite. After the Johar, the Sirdar gave a little sermon to the new boys. He waved a siari stalk round them three times and said, 'Bear this *Adwar* [pole for carrying loads]. Serve the [ghotul] government. Give food to the official and the stranger. Serve and feed your father and mother. Now you have a new name. Grow up quickly and live till you are an old man.' He put rice-marks on their foreheads and gave them a leaf-cup of liquor. In Aturgaon, the leader gives the initiates a ring, but this was not done here.

In many villages, when he gets his name, the initiate gives a bottle of liquor to the ghotul, of which he then becomes a full member. He is then excused the tiresome duties of childhood. He no longer has to bring wood daily: he no longer salutes anyone. But in some places, the little boy has to continue doing this even after he has got his title until he is 'grown up' and makes a formal offering of liquor to the ghotul. For a girl, a title means less change, for she still has to salute the boys every night and perform her obligations in tobacco, leaves and cleaning. But boys and girls alike gain a new dignity,

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and they are soon ordering about those unfortunate children who have not yet received their names.

III

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In time the little boy will grow up and may become Sirdar or Diwan; the little girl may one day be Belosa. How are these appointments made? The choosing of the leaders is a serious matter, for they not only have great power over the happiness of the children, but they are also responsible for the smooth working of village life. The elders of the village, as well as the boys and girls, are anxious that the best appointments should be made.

How is the leader chosen? The Muria have not discovered the principle of voting, which I do not think would appeal to a people so devoid of jealousy and the spirit of rivalry. Generally the new leader is an obvious choice; the boy who has acted as second-in-command has been well trained, and if he is a good boy will naturally step into the old leader's place. If all the leaders are married in the same year, the matter is more difficult; but if he is available, the position usually goes to the boy whose special duty it has been to look after the motiari. If he can fill that, he can fill any office. The choice is made easier by the fact that the old leader does not relinquish his office immediately after marriage; he continues in it for six to twelve months longer. Sometimes he remains permanently; at Masora, the Diwan is Lakmu, a married man with sons in the ghotul. But Lakmu still retains his title and is the final court of appeal in all disputes. Under these circumstances there is plenty of time for the ghotul to make up its mind. In a serious case of dispute, the village headman or the Pargana Manjhi is asked to intervene and decide.

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The leader of the girls is appointed in much the same way, though here the influence of the boys' leader counts for a great deal. Especially in those ghotul where the chelik and motiari pair off, the Sirdar's motiari is often made leader of the girls.

What sort of boy or girl is chosen to be Sirdar or Belosa? Except in the Kalpatti and Bandadesh Pargana of the north-west, where the son or a near relative of the Kaser-Gaita must be appointed, no one has any claim on office by reason of the wealth or position of his parents. To become the head of a ghotul is a simple triumph of character. We may gain some idea of the qualities expected from the following descriptions. The first is from Binjhli. 'A good man is one who helps in difficulty and sympathises in sorrow. Dhansai Muria was like that. He never told a lie. He spoke kindly and gently to everyone. He was never seen angry. Even when he was drunk he never swore at people.' And in Kuntpadar we were told about Nattu Babu, a Mussalman. 'He thinks everyone equal to him. He loves humble people, he loves the ugly, he loves the destitute. You would never think he was a Mussalman.' On the other hand, a bad man, like Mundra Muria, is 'friends with no one. He speaks friendly to your face, then goes away and does you an injury. When there is work he avoids it, he is rough and abusive in speech. When he sees a good harvest in another's field, he burns with jealousy.'

A leader therefore must be gentle, friendly, not quick to anger or abuse, a good worker himself. He must be able to organise the work at a marriage or festival, and arrange for an official's camp. He must be popular with the girls, who naturally have a lot to say in his appointment. And in most ghotul, the leader admirably fulfils these conditions. You could not find anywhere boys more intelligent, gentle and hard-working than the boys who